

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANJUL 00505 091006Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4238

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BANJUL 0505

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GA

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT JAWARA HOLDS POST-ELECTION PRESS
CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING SWEEPING PPP ELECTORAL VICTORY, APRIL 7 WAS SET ASIDE
AS DAY FOR RECEIVING CONGRATULATIONS AND GENERAL REJOICING BY WINNERS

.

PRESIDENT JAWARA RECEIVED PRESS CORPS (USUALLY SMALL, BUT FOR
THIS SESSION AUGMENTED BY REUTER, AFP, TASS, AND REPS OF SEVERAL
WEST AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS), FOLLOWED BY CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS,
AND OTHER LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE, SIR DAWDA SAID HE WAS "EXTREMELY
SATISFIED" WITH ELECTORAL RESULTS, WHICH HE INTERPRETS AS MAJOR
VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS ADMINISTRATION. PRESIDENT STRESSED
PEACEFUL WAY IN WHICH PROCESS CARRIED OUT, NOTING THAT THERE WERE
ONLY A FEW MINOR INCIDENTS. HE SEES NO NEED FOR MAJOR POLICY
CHANGES, AS ELECTORATE HAS SHOWN CLEAR PREFERENCE FOR PRESENT
COURSE. SIR DAWDA POINTED OUT THAT PPP HAD 69.58 PER CENT OF
POPULAR VOTE THIS ROUND, VERSUS 63 PER CENT IN 1972 ELECTION.

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3. ADMITTING THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME "SURPRISES" DURING
ELECTION (PRESUMABLY ALLUSION TO 2 DEFEATED MINISTERS), PRESIDENT
SAID SOME CHANGES IN HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED. HE NOTED
THAT PRESIDENT NOMINATES 4 NON-ELECTED MEMBERS OF HOUSE, AN ONE
OF WHOM COULD BE APPOINTED MINISTER. HE WOULD NOT COMMIT HIMSELF
TO A TIMETABLE FOR ANNOUNCING NEW CABINET.

4. REGARDING OPPOSITION, SIR DAWDA SAID HE HAD NO INFORMATION OF ANY CROSSOVER BY NCP TO GOVERNMENT SAIDE OF HOUSE. MOREOVER, HE ADDED, "CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION" WOULD BENEFIT GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS.

ASKED ABOUT NCP STRENGTH IN BADIBBUS (WHERE DIBBA'S PARTY WON 3 OF ITS 5 SEAT TOTAL), PRESIDENT CHUCKLED THAT PEOPLE VOTED FOR PARTY OF THEIR CHOICE, AND OBVIOUSLY NCP MOREULAR THERE. THE GAMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY IS FULLY VINDICATED BY THIS ELECTORAL EXERCISE, HE CONCLUDED.

5. WHILE PRESS CONFERENCE ALMOST WHOLLY DEVOTED TO POLITICS, PRESIDENT DID STRESS NEED TO GET ON WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT COST OF CURRENT (1975-1980) FIVE-YEAR PLAN HAS GONE FROM ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF DALASIS 150 MILLION TO DALASIS 300 MILLION DUE TO INFLATION. WYGANT

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